WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A printing control apparatus comprising:

plural expansion processing means for expanding printing data of a predetermined format to image data of a format to be output to a printer, by a segment;

calculation means for calculating, before the expansion processing is performed by said expansion processing means, a processing time necessary to expand the printing data to the image data for each segment; and

scheduling processing means for scheduling the expansion processing for each segment by said plural expansion processing means, based on the time calculated by said calculation means.

2. An apparatus according to Claim 1, further comprising transfer means for transferring the expanded image data to said printer, and

wherein said scheduling processing means further comprises judgment means for judging for each segment whether or not the expansion processing is to be performed by said expansion processing means before the transfer of the image data is started, based on the time calculated by said calculation means.

3. An apparatus according to Claim 2, further comprising compression means for compressing the

~~expanded image data for the segment to which it was~~
judged by said judgment means that the expansion
processing is to be performed by said expansion
processing means before the transfer of the image data

5   is started.

       4.   An apparatus according to Claim 1, further
comprising:
       reception means for receiving output data from a

10   data processing apparatus; and
       conversion means for converting the received data
into the printing data of the predetermined format.

       5.   An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the

15   printing data of the predetermined format is
intermediate data of a format classified for each band.

       6.   A data processing method for a printing
control apparatus comprising:

20   an expansion processing step of expanding, by
using plural expansion processing means, printing data
of a predetermined format to image data of a format to
be output to a printer, by a segment;
       a calculation step of calculating, before the

25   expansion processing is performed by the expansion
processing means, a processing time necessary to expand
the printing data to the image data for each segment;

and

a scheduling processing step of scheduling the expansion processing for each segment by the plural expansion processing means, based on the time

5 calculated in said calculation step.

7. A method according to Claim 6, further comprising a transfer step of transferring the expanded image data to the printer, and

10 wherein said scheduling processing step further comprises a judgment step of judging for each segment whether or not the expansion processing is to be performed in said expansion processing step before the transfer of the image data is started, based on the

15 time calculated in said calculation step.

8. A method according to Claim 7, further comprising a compression step of compressing the expanded image data for the segment to which it was

20 judged in said judgment step that the expansion processing is to be performed in said expansion processing step before the transfer of the image data is started.

25 9. A method according to Claim 6, further comprising:

a reception step of receiving output data from a

data processing apparatus; and

a conversion step of converting the received data into the printing data of the predetermined format.

5   10.   A method according to Claim 6, wherein the printing data of the predetermined format is intermediate data of a format classified for each band.

11.   A storage medium which stores a computer-readable program to control a printer, said program being to execute:

an expansion processing step of expanding, by using plural expansion processing means, printing data of a predetermined format to image data of a format to be output to a printer, by a segment;

a calculation step of calculating, before the expansion processing is performed by the expansion processing means, a processing time necessary to expand the printing data to the image data for each segment; and

a scheduling processing step of scheduling the expansion processing for each segment by the plural expansion processing means, based on the time calculated in said calculation step.

12.   A medium according to Claim 11, wherein said medium further stores a program to execute a transfer

step of transferring the expanded image data to the

printer, and

said scheduling processing step comprises a

judgment step of judging for each segment whether or

5   not the expansion processing is to be performed in said

expansion processing step before the transfer of the

image data is started, based on the time calculated in

said calculation step.

10   13. A medium according to Claim 12, wherein said

medium further stores a program to execute a

compression step of compressing the expanded image data

for the segment to which it was judged that the

expansion processing is to be performed in said

15   expansion processing step before the transfer of the

image data is started.

14. A medium according to Claim 11, wherein said

medium further stores a program to execute:

20   a reception step of receiving output data from a

data processing apparatus; and

a conversion step of converting the received data

into the printing data of the predetermined format.

25   15. A medium according to Claim 11, wherein the

printing data of the predetermined format is

intermediate data of a format classified for each band.